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ABSTRACT

If schools are to respond effectively to the problems of youth at risk, they must build "reclaiming" environments that recover alienated youths by addressing both the students' needs and the needs of society. In the first of three sections, this document examines the alienation of children in a frequently inhospitable society. Destructive relationships at home and at school, the effects of negative environments and expectations, and the outcomes of naive theories of behavior among educators are discussed as well as learned irresponsibility, the loss of purpose among youth, and problems associated with excessive individualism, depersonalization, and the changing role of work in students' lives. In an exploration of Native American child-rearing philosophies, the second section examines the spirits of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity that are perceived as values in Native American culture and that nurture four essential components of self-esteem: significance, competence, power, and virtue. The final section highlights principles and strategies related to establishing positive relationships with at-risk youths, implementing alternative methods for organizing learning experiences, disciplining to counter irresponsibility, and fostering prosocial values in youth. Each section is followed by corresponding references. (CLA)

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